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# The analysis of the guidance and psychological counselling needs of older people in terms of several variables

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## Abstract

This study examines the guidance and psychological needs of older people in terms of two variables: current employment status of older people and the place where they have spent most of their lives. The sample group of the study consists of 667 randomly selected independent older people who resided in the city centres of Amasya, Samsun and Sanliurfa between 2009 and 2010. The study shows that there is a significant difference between current employment status of older people, the type of place where they have spent most of their lives, and the guidance and psychological counselling needs of them.

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## 1. Introduction

The older population has been gradually increasing around the world. Improvement of life conditions as well as developing health services has extended the human life span. Social changes unparallel to rapid technological progress cause older people to face many challenges (Palabiyikoglu et al., 1992). Thus, the older population has become the most important social problem of the entire world (Bekaroglu, 1991; Altekruze & Ray, 1998).

Old age is a period during which an individual is no longer actively involved in production and experiences loss of role and status. Moreover, in this period physical strength diminishes; dependency, accident risk, disability and medication consumption increase; body adjustment to external world and its resistance to stressors decrease; body becomes more prone to illnesses because of immune deficiency; as a result, it suffers from many degenerative and chronic diseases. Old age is also a public health issue that concerns both health system and socio-economic systems, and requires multi-sectoral and multi-disciplined service (Terakye & Guner, 1997).

Counselling intervention with older people has been neglected due to the common misunderstanding that old age is developmentally stable (Mardoyan & Weis, 1981). Older people, however, are potential patient population for the counsellors of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Counselling older adults is becoming a more specialized field than before. Being cared about by others is a little known psychosocial structure that may be associated with more serious practices in daily life of older adults. Being cared about by others is a powerful experience that all people need. Being cared about in old age has an influence on other psychological structures of older people (Dixon, 2007).

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A situation assessment is the first step necessary to solve the problems of older population. It is also a necessity to determine the number of older people, their physical and social problems, and the primary ones of these problems (Bekaroglu, 1991).

All field specialists have great duties and responsibilities especially related to aging psychology such as education of society, establishment of sufficient and appropriate social support and organizations. Thus, a research is needed to determine the guidance and psychological counselling needs of older people. This research aims to determine the guidance and psychological counselling needs of older people.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Research Model*

The study is descriptive as it determines how the guidance and psychological needs of older people differ depending on the two variables – current employment status and the place where older people have spent most of their lives – and based on single screening model (Karasar, 2000).

### *2.2. Target Population and Sample Group*

The target population consists of people aged 60 and over who are independent and reside in the city centres of Amasya, Samsun and Sanliurfa. While choosing the sample group, it is taken into consideration that the older people shall be accessible, independent and reside in districts with different socioeconomic levels. The sample group consists of 667 independent older people who reside in these city centres.

### *2.3. Data- Collection Tool*

In this study, Older People's Guidance and Psychological Counselling Needs Scale was used. The validity and reliability of the scale consisting of 20 items with 4 choices were assessed on 400 older people. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated as .87; the test-retest reliability coefficient was calculated as .87. A single factor was obtained as a result of factor analysis conducted for structure validity. The findings obtained show that the scale is valid and reliable (Demirdis, 2010). Personal information forms were used to determine current employment status of older people and the place where they have spent most of their lives. The form includes close-ended questions related to the mentioned variables above and older people who contributed to this survey were asked to choose the most appropriate choice.

### *2.4. Data Collection*

Older People's Guidance and Psychological Counselling Needs Scale was applied to 667 older people in the city centres of Amasya, Samsun and Sanliurfa. Copied scales were filled in under the supervision of surveyors.

### *2.5. Data Analysis*

The data collected from Older People's Guidance and Psychological Counselling Needs Scale were analysed using SPSS 15.0 Program. By performing descriptive statistical analyses during analysis period, the data were assessed as percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation. Since the results of Older People's Guidance and Psychological Counselling Needs Scale do not have normal distribution, non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-test and Kruskal-Wallis test were used for the significance analyses (Buyukozturk, 2004).

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1. Findings concerning older people who participated in the survey

Table 1 shows the distribution of the participants in terms of current employment status and the place where they have spent most of their lives.

Table 1. The distribution of older people in terms of several variables (N=667)

Variables		F	%
Current Employment status	Working full-time	40	6
	Working part-time	30	4,5
	Retired, not working	381	57,1
	Retired, working full-time	4	0,6
	Retired, working part-time	36	5,4
	Not working	176	26,4
The place where older people have spent most of their lives	Village	173	25,9
	Town	71	10,6
	City	293	44
	Metropolis	130	19,5
Total		667	100

As Table 1 shows, 6 % of the participants work full-time, 4,5 % work part-time, 57,1 % are retired and do not work, 0,6 % are retired and work full-time, 5,4 % are retired and work part-time, and 26,4 % are not retired and do not work. Moreover; 25,9 % of the participants live in a village, 10,6 % in a town; 44 % in a city, 19,5 % in a metropolis.

#### 3.2. Findings concerning the Guidance and Psychological Counselling Needs of Older People

##### 3.2.1. Findings concerning the Influence of Current Employment Status on the Guidance and Psychological Counselling Needs of Older People

When examining the influence of current employment status on the guidance and psychological needs of older people, Kruskal-Wallis test is used in the analysis of data since the variable of current employment status has six different values. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistical data concerning these six groups. Table 3 and Table 4 show findings of the analysis whether the guidance and psychological needs of older people differ significantly depending on the variable of current employment status.

Table 2. The Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation Values concerning the Guidance and Psychological Counselling Needs of Older People in terms of Current Employment Status

95 % confidence interval for the mean								
Current employment status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Min.	Max.
Working full-time	40	48,33	10,95	1,73	44,82	51,83	22	75
Working part-time	30	56,73	12,15	2,22	52,19	61,27	32	80
Retired, not working	381	49,77	8,99	0,46	48,86	50,67	28	80
Retired, working full-time	4	39,5	3,7	1,84	33,62	45,38	35	43
Retired, working part-time	36	47,83	9,03	1,50	44,78	50,89	27	64
Not working	176	53,57	11,16	0,84	51,91	55,23	25	78
TOTAL	667	50,8321	10,12	0,39	50,06	51,60	22	80

**Table 3. The Means concerning the Influence of Current Employment Status on the Guidance and Psychological Counselling Needs of Older People**

	<b>Current Employment Status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Sequence</b>
Need	Working full-time	40	285,99
	Working part-time	30	437,05
	Retired, not working	381	315,09
	Retired, working full-time	4	97,00
	Retired, working part-time	36	289,47
	Not working	176	382,78
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>667</b>	

**Table 4 Kruskal-Wallis Test concerning the Influence of Current Employment Status on the Guidance and Psychological Counselling Needs of Older People**

	<b>Need</b>
Chi-Square	34,020
df	5
Asymp.Sig.	,000

Since the results of Kruskal-Wallis test show  $p(,000) < 0,05$ , there is an significant difference in the guidance and psychological needs of older people depending on the six different values of current employment status. As it seems in the Table 2, older people working part-time have the highest need for guidance and psychological counselling according to the mean scores.

Mann-Whitney U-test was used to assess whether the difference among the groups is significant. Benferroni correction was used to determine the significant difference and the significance level was 0.0033.

According to the result of Mann-Whitney U-test conducted to determine which groups are associated with the significant difference observed among the groups, the older people working part-time have higher need for guidance and psychological counselling than the older people retired and working part time, and the ones retired and not working. The difference was found significant ( $p(,001) < ,0033$ ). Moreover, the older people who are retired and not working have lower need for guidance and psychological counselling than the ones who are not retired and not working. The difference was found significant ( $p(,000) < ,0033$ ).

### 3.2.2. Findings concerning the Influence of the Place Where Older People Have Spent Most of Their Lives on the Guidance and Psychological Needs of Them

When examining the influence of the place where older people have spent most of their lives on the guidance and psychological needs of them, Kruskal-Wallis test was used in the analysis of findings since the variable of the place where they have spent most of their lives has four different values. Table 5 shows the statistical data of these four groups. Table 6 and Table 7 show the findings of the analysis whether the guidance and psychological needs of older people differ significantly depending on the place where they have spent most of their lives.

**Table 5. The Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation Values concerning the Guidance and Psychological Counselling Needs of Older People in terms of the place where they have spent most of their lives**

<b>95 % confidence interval for the mean</b>								
<b>The place where they have spent most of their lives</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Lower Limit</b>	<b>Upper Limit</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>
Village	173	55,83	9,77	0,74	54,37	57,30	29	75
Town	71	51,68	9,95	1,18	49,32	54,03	25	77
City	293	50,01	9,49	0,55	48,92	51,10	27	80
Metropolis	130	45,57	8,97	0,79	44,01	47,12	22	73
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>50,83</b>	<b>10,12</b>	<b>0,39</b>	<b>50,06</b>	<b>51,60</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>80</b>

**Table 6. The Means concerning the Influence of the Place Where they Have Spent Most of Their Lives on the Guidance and Psychological Counselling Needs of Older People**

	<b>The place where they have spent most of their lives</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Sequence</b>
Need	Village	173	433,34
	Town	71	358,29
	City	293	312,85
	Metropolis	130	236,19
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>667</b>	

**Table 7. Kruskal-Wallis Test concerning the Influence of the Place Where Older People Have Spent Most of Their Lives on the Guidance and Psychological Counselling Needs of Older People**

	<b>Need</b>
Chi-Square	84,214
df	3
Asymp.Sig.	,000

Since the results of Kruskal-Wallis show  $p(,000) < 0,05$ , there is a significant difference in the guidance and psychological needs of older people depending on the four different places where they have spent most of their lives. As seen in the Table 5, the older people who have spent most of their lives in a village have the highest need for guidance and the psychological counselling according to the mean scores.

Mann-Whitney U-test was used to assess whether the difference observed among the groups is significant. Benferroni correction was used to determine the significant difference and the significance level was 0.0083.

According to the result of Mann-Whitney U-test conducted to determine which groups are associated with the significant difference observed among the groups, the older people who have spent most of their live in a village have higher need for guidance and psychological counselling than the ones who have spent most of their lives in a town, city or metropolis. The difference was found significant ( $p(,000) < ,0083$ ). Moreover, the older people who have spent most of their lives in a metropolis have lower need for guidance and psychological counselling than the ones who have spent most of their lives in a town or city. The difference was found significant ( $p(,000) < ,0083$ ).

#### **4. Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestion**

The guidance and psychological needs level of older people who participated in the survey differ depending on the variables of “current employment status” and “the place where they have spent most of their lives”.

Thus, it is determined that the means decrease concerning the guidance and psychological needs of the older people who are retired and work in old age. On the other hand the guidance and psychological needs of older people decrease, when the development level of the place where older people have spent most of their lives increases.

These results correspond with some studies in the literature. According to the research there is a significant difference between current employment status of older people, the type of place where they have spent most of their lives, and the guidance and psychological counselling needs of them. In this regard the study on the determination of older people’s levels of need and demand for psychological counselling conducted by Myers (1993) suggests that the older people with low income and the older people living in rural areas have higher need and demand for psychological counselling. A study of Brewington and McMillan (2000) suggests that older people not working experience more stress than young people who are not working. In their study Terakye and Guner (1997) state that older people’s quality of life is parallel to their being earner and their levels of community participation. The study conducted by Coskun (1998) to determine the continuous anxiety levels of people aged 65 and older and to analyse their relationships with some socioeconomic factors suggests that continuous anxiety scores increase in older people without social security and older people with low income. The study on analysis of older people’s quality of life

carried out by Calistir et al. (2006) shows that older people without social security and older people with green cards have low scores in the quality of life scale, and that older people's quality of life increases when their economic conditions increase. The study conducted by Baran et al. (2007) to determine daily life satisfaction levels of older people suggests that life satisfaction levels of older people increase when their economic status increases.

Suggestions in accordance with the findings obtained from this study:

Social policies must be developed to provide social security for individuals during older ages within the frame of retirement and to enable them to continue their lives as producers. Practices and group guidance activities must be done to compensate for psychological problems based on worthlessness resulted from the loss of social roles. It is also necessary to form groups in which older people living in areas with low level of development come together with the ones in areas with high level of development. Less developed areas need preventive social policies which will enable individuals to experience less psychological problems during older ages's. Social projects must be performed and supported to extend mental health services and other related services that are provided for older people in developed areas throughout the country.

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